

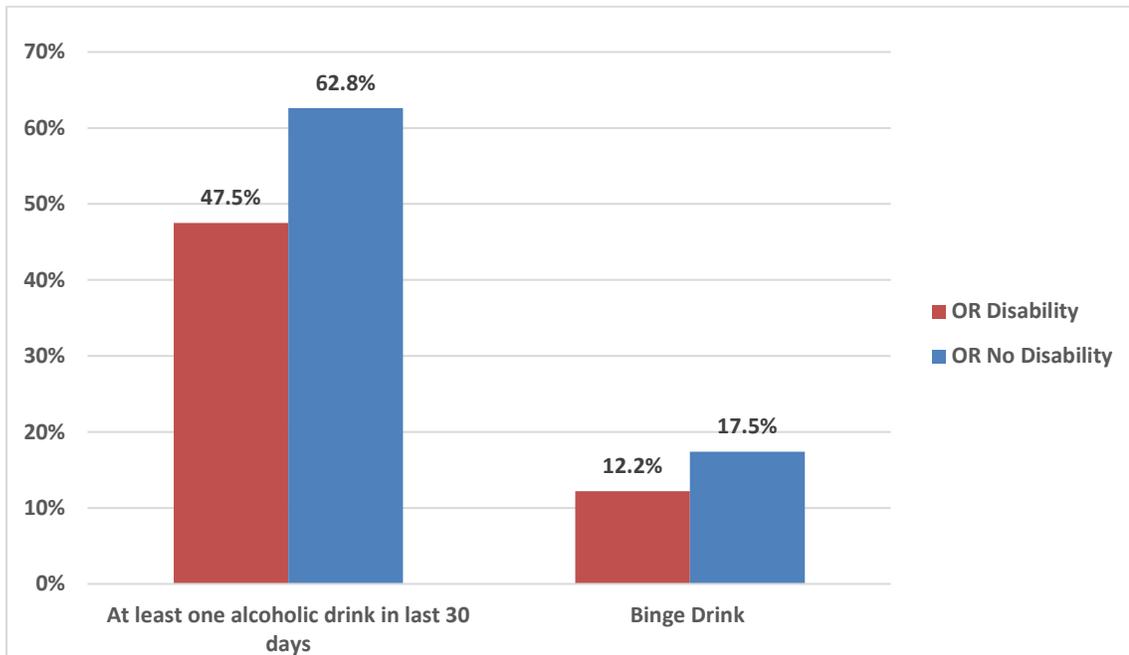


Alcohol Use among Oregonians with Disabilities

Oregon Office on Disability and Health

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that excessive amounts of alcohol drinking have deleterious effects for health. Alcohol consumption has been linked to domestic violence, unintentional injuries, liver disease, and cancer¹. The CDC categorized excessive drinking and binge drinking as having 5 or more drinks on an occasion for men, or 4 or more drinks on an occasion for women. The following data from the 2014 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)² shows alcohol consumption rates among Oregon adults with and without disabilities. The BRFSS is a telephone based survey that is conducted annually in all 50 states in the US.

Figure 1. Alcohol Use among Adults, 2014 BRFSS Data



When we compared Oregon adults with and without disabilities we found that:

- Oregon adults with disabilities were less likely to use alcohol than Oregon adults without disabilities.
- 47.5% of adults with disabilities had at least one alcoholic drink in the last 30 days compared to 62.8% of adults without disabilities.
- 12.2% of adults with disabilities binge drink compared to 17.5% of adults without disabilities.

What is a “drink”?**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

In the United States, a standard drink contains 0.6 ounces of pure alcohol. Generally, this amount of pure alcohol is found in:

- 12-ounces of beer (5% alcohol content)
- 8-ounces of malt liquor (7% alcohol content)
- 5-ounces of wine (12% alcohol content)
- 1.5-ounces of 80-proof (40% alcohol content) distilled spirits or liquor (e.g. gin, rum, vodka, whiskey)

Health Risks

Excessive alcohol use has many health effects. Some are immediate and some develop over time.

Short term health risks include:³

- Injuries such as crashes, falls, drownings, and burns
- Violence
- Alcohol poisoning
- Risky sexual behaviors such as unprotected sex and sex with multiple partners
- Miscarriage and stillbirth among pregnant women
- Fetal alcohol spectrum disorders among children of women who drink excessively during pregnancy

Long term health risks include:^{3,4}

- High blood pressure and heart disease
- Stroke
- Liver disease
- Cancer
- Learning and memory problems
- Mental health problems
- Social problems
- Alcohol dependence or alcoholism

Recommendations:

Alcohol use appears to be lower among adults with disabilities than those without disabilities in Oregon. However, people with disabilities who do need help with alcohol abuse may be less likely to receive needed services. Research needs to be done on the accessibility and effectiveness of these programs to make sure that people with disabilities are receiving the same level of care as those without disabilities.

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¹ Glazier R.E., Kling R.N. (2013). Recent trends in substance abuse among persons with disabilities compared to that of person without disabilities. *Disability and Health Journal*. 6. 107-115. DOI: 10.1016/j.dhjo.2013.01.007

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). *Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey Data*. Atlanta, Georgia: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2014.

³ Barrett N., Paschos D. (2006). Alcohol-related problems in adolescents and adults with intellectual disabilities. *Current Opinion in Psychiatry*. 19(5). 481-485. DOI: 10.1097/01.yco.0000238474.07078.41.

⁴ Andrews, G., S. Henderson, and W. Hall, *Prevalence, comorbidity, disability and service utilisation*. The British Journal of Psychiatry, 2001. **178**(2): p. 145-153.